

THE TIMES
3 September 1981

India bars diplomat accused of CIA links

From Trevor Fishlock
Delhi, Sept 2

A United States diplomat who served for 18 months in the embassy in Kabul has been refused permission by the Indian Government to take up a post in Delhi.

A few months ago, Mr. George Griffin, who was deputy charge d'affaires in Kabul, was the subject of a number of reports in Indian newspapers, mostly Communist ones. These alleged that he was a CIA agent. The reports were reproduced by Tass and published in the Soviet Union and Afghanistan.

The United States Government protested to the Soviet Government about the reports. In May, an Indian MP repeated the newspaper allegations in Parliament, including a report that suggested that Mr. Griffin had had a part in an alleged attempt to sabotage the aircraft of Mrs. Indira Gandhi, the Indian Prime Minister.

Mr. Griffin, a south Asia expert, who had previous postings in India and Pakistan, went to Afghanistan soon after the Russian occupation. At the end of his tour in Kabul he was to have been political counsellor at the embassy in Delhi.

There is speculation here that the Soviet Union may have made known to the Indians that it was displeased by the appointment. The Indian Government said tonight that nothing of the kind had happened.

India's view is that because Mr. Griffin had been the subject of newspapers reports and had been mentioned in Parliament, he had become unsuitable for the delicate position to which he had been appointed. It was felt his presence may have been an irritant.

The United States today announced that Mr. Griffin's Indian counterpart would be barred from Washington.